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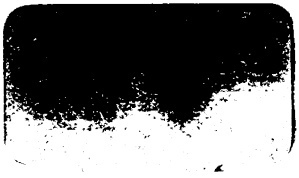
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A QUINTETTE OF GRAYCOATS



BY EFFIE BIGNELL

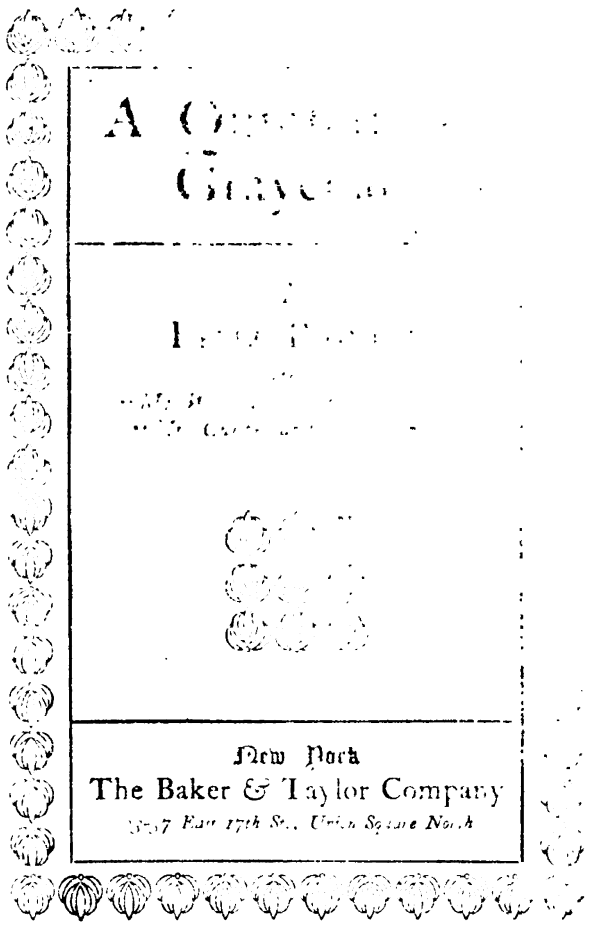
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A QUINTETTE OF GRAYCOATS



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



New York
The Baker & Taylor Company
33-37 East 17th St., Union Square North



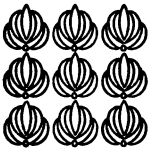
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A Quintette of Graycoats

By

EFFIE BIGNELL

Author of
"My Woodland Intimates" ana
"Mr. Chupes and Miss Jenny"



New York
The Baker & Taylor Company
33-37 East 17th St., Union Square North

KD 354

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This little book is dedicated
to the Memory of one
Who loved "all things both great and small."

DR. ALBERT HUNTINGTON CHESTER,

of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by."

IN MEMORIAM

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INTRODUCING TWO IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE COLONY

And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Frisked and chattered very gayly,
Toiled and tugged with Hiawatha
Till the labor was completed.
Then said Hiawatha to him,
"O, my little friend, the squirrel,
Bravely have you toiled to help me;
Take the thanks of Hiawatha,
And the name which now he gives you;
For hereafter and forever
Boys shall call you Adjidaumo,
Tail-in-the-air the boys shall call you."

The Song of Hiawatha.

A QUINTETTE OF GRAYCOATS

I

INTRODUCING TWO IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE COLONY

It is my good fortune to dwell on the confines of a woodland stretch, and, from the heart of the miniature forest, there come to me many timid little creatures whose haunts and homes are in and around the trees. The majority of these shy folk do not advance beyond the outer sill of the window, where I daily spread a feast of such provisions as appeal to their tastes; but the more venturesome of my woodland acquaintances enter my den and investigate my

possessions as often as opportunity permits. Their partiality for my study compels such simplicity of furnishing that, by degrees, nearly all superfluities have been banished, and little remains that does not represent either my actual need and comfort or the convenience of these forest visitors.

One luxurious creature shares the study with me and yields none of her prerogatives to the outdoor folk. My little Chihuahua dog curls herself up in her snug basket and enjoys unmolested the warm coverings and soft cushions with which it is furnished; but were it not that she is a dog of great spirit and brooks no interference, I doubt not that both her bed and bedding would long ere this have been boldly appropriated and transferred piecemeal to the hollow trunks and other cosy quarters.

Sometimes she leaves her snuggery to indulge in frolics with these little visitors, but she it is—not they—who appoints the occasion and time-limit of these amusing gambols.

I am beginning this little chronicle at the season when the golden rod is on the wane and the trees are doffing their robes of scarlet and gold; when the air is filled with the mellow scents and minor sounds of autumn, and night intrenches more and more on the province of day, for the summer is past, and nature is telling again the beautiful old story of the fall of the year.

But, even as I write, a brisk, business-like chattering is heard in the trees near us, and the branches opposite my outlook window sway in response to the passing of tiny feet. Now a lithe form is seen gliding in and out among the

yellow leaves or leaping from bough to bough; then, with merry scamper and saucy squeak, a red squirrel dances over the veranda roof and springs up on the window-sill; and as the bright-eyed creature enters my room, the gentle melancholy of the day is dispelled, and, for a time at least, all thoughts of autumn sadness are banished.

This squirrel lady and I have long been close friends. True, we have our differences now and then; our times of mutual recrimination apropos of such matters as inferior menus or property raids, for instance, but trifles like these do not permanently affect our friendship, and, on the whole, we are well pleased with each other.

Madame Jolie-Queue—for so we have named this little redcoat—knows the way of the den well. It is with an



THE BEAUTIFUL STORY OF THE FALL OF THE YEAR.

air of following a route, not only of promise, but also of fulfillment, that she leaps to my writing-table—ruthlessly scattering pens and pencils as she goes—and makes her way toward a basket which represents the mecca of her pilgrimage. In this receptacle she is certain to find something to her liking. Now with nose and paws she rapidly digs and delves among the nuts in search of the daintiest dainties, for Madame Jolie-Queue, like all other members of her tribe and of every tribe, in fact, has her preferences; and among nuts her first choice always falls upon almonds, while peanuts figure at the end of the descending scale.

One evening just at dusk, some years ago, we were startled by certain stealthy and uncanny sounds, proceeding from an unoccupied and remote corner of the

house. With cat-like tread and burglar-annihilating designs a reconnoitering party set out, but when the invaded quarter was reached and a searchlight thrown into the room, the depredators were found to be only a company of little red squirrels. The tiny robbers had discovered a magnificent store of nuts, from among which they were selecting and laying aside for transportation all the almonds that they could reach. A fine pyramid of the favorite nuts represented the result of their labors and the cause of the mysterious sounds. I need not say that the invaders were allowed to depart unmolested with their entire spoil.

But such superlatively fine foraging opportunities as the one just cited are few in number; for, except on the rare occasions when we forget to protect our

premises and possessions, wire screens or closed windows bar the squirrels' favorite points of entrance, and the guards are removed only when we are at home to these rather unprincipled callers. I must acknowledge that, as a general thing, our property rights have been respected during reception hours, but now and then an article of dress or furnishing will appeal forcibly to the furry guests' tastes, especially if the material be soft and warm and suitable for bedding. Again, however, the most inappropriate objects may strike the fancy of the acquisitive little creatures. For instance, Madame Jolie-Queue has been known to carry off and stow away in the tree crotches small leather objects, bits of coal, and various other articles which would appear to be equally out of place in a squirrel ménage. She is by

far the most daring and mischievous member of the colony. I came upon her one day as she was emerging from a tiny opening in a cellar window-screen. The air of relish with which she worked her little jaws suggested a recent feast of surpassing excellence, and led me to investigate the store-room from which she had issued. There I found several uncovered baskets of fruit, all the outer layers of which had evidently been tasted by her, for in each exposed pear, peach and apple there was a fresh little round bite; unmistakably the work of Madame Jolie-Queue. No wonder that she had the air of a successful forager. On her return for a second raid, however, she looked in vain for an opening in the screen.

Now another squirrel—Rufus, by name—appears at the window-sill; but,

although Madame Jolie-Queue is his mate, he manifests both hesitancy and uneasiness at sight of her. There was a time when he was master of the situation and monarch of the window sill and den. Both these posts he guarded against all other furry intruders, and in particular against one gentle little squirrel lady, his mate at the time. But in Madame Jolie-Queue—the successor of the meek little dame—Rufus has met that dread power which we call retribution. His rule is over. He is now under the strictest kind of petticoat government, and he eats meekly from the sill instead of feasting in the banquetting-hall.

To those not intimately acquainted with our squirrel-folk, it is often a matter of surprise that I am enabled to distinguish one from another among the

many visitors who present themselves at my supply-window or enter my den. But the secret is an open one. It requires careful observation only, and not any marvelous perception or intuition, to discover the individuality of each. In some cases, striking peculiarities make identification easy; but variety of form, feature and character exist among squirrels as well as among members of the great human family. Individuality is the seal with which every creature is stamped. Patient watching and investigation have revealed it even in the tiniest insects.

My squirrel friends and neighbors appear to know me well, but I often wonder whether they would recognize me in surroundings with which they are not familiar. On two or three occasions, when returning from an outing

in the town, I have met Madame Jolie-Queue careering down the sidewalk towards me. But whether this was a little show of friendliness—prompted perhaps by the hope of receiving bounty from my hands—or whether the encounter was a chance one, I cannot say. I never allowed myself an opportunity of testing the matter, for I am determined to discourage this strolling propensity in the little lady; and I sent her back to the shelter of the woods with such a severe scolding and so many hostile demonstrations that she must have thought me a very different person at home and abroad, if she recognized me. The fact that I have occasionally found a wounded squirrel dragging itself back to our woods to die, has made me anxious to impress on these trusting little

folk the fact that danger lurks outside the grove boundaries.

Rufus has made a lunch of such supplies as the window sill affords, and now—after one wistful glance at the well-stocked basket—he is off; bounding over the veranda, leaping through the boughs, and again the branches wave and the yellow leaves tremble at the passing of a lithe form, and once more the friendly trees hide him from our view.

Is it his departure which has started Madame Jolie-Queue on such a deep train of thought that the nutshells fall unheeded from her drooping paws and she halts in a half upright position as if suddenly touched by enchantment? Now the beautiful large eyes turn towards me and I wonder, as I always do on like occasions, whether I am the sub-

ject of her revery. "Who can tell what just criticisms the cat, in her chimney corner, is passing on human beings," some one has said. If Madame Jolie-Queue is capable of drawing comparisons, how circumscribed my life must appear when viewed from the squirrel standpoint. How hampered my movements, how slow and awkward my gait, how limited my opportunities and how immensely superior her qualifications and advantages.

But, as suddenly as it began, the revery ends, and with a flourish of her tail and a joyful chattering which may represent the self-congratulatory climax of her meditation, Madame Jolie-Queue is off; and, as she departs, the gentle melancholy of the autumn day resumes its sway.

NOTABLE HOUSEHOLDERS

My nest-home inside is dark, warm and
soft
As the sable-haired breast of a panting
bee.

Elf of the Woodlands.

—R. H. HORNE.

II

NOTABLE HOUSEHOLDERS

It is the custom of my squirrel visitors to bound away in the direction of the grove at the close of a window-sill banquet; for, as I have already said, their snug little dwellings are usually to be found among the trees or in their near neighborhood. The play and hunting-grounds are also in the wooded region. But although Madame Jolie-Queue may frequently be seen careering among the tree-tops and dashing through the branches, it was in vain that I searched the grove for some trace of her dwelling. I never saw her either enter or emerge from any of the little squirrel houses perched up in the tree-

arms, and no deserted woodpecker nest or other desirable hollow appeared to be claimed by her.

Another thing that puzzled me was her remarkable and almost constant nearness to our house. She usually appears simultaneously with the putting-out of the provisions, as if, from some near and convenient outlook post, she could keep an eye on the workings of the table d'hôte; and her babies are always taken to the trees nearest our dwelling, for their perilous and uncertain earliest outings.

But all things come to him who knows how to wait. One lovely spring morning, as I sat out under the maples at the back of our house, my attention was attracted by a slight noise overhead, and looking up toward the roof I espied among the house-trimmings a tiny head



Drawn from photographs

comically suggestive of a miniature gargoyle. The head and I observed each other attentively for a few seconds, after which it withdrew, and, with its removal, a neat little excavation came to light. Another period of waiting and of upward gazing and I was rewarded by a sight, not only of the head, but also of its owner, who proved to be none other than Madame Jolie-Queue. At last I had discovered her dwelling. Her promptness at meals was no longer a mystery. The surprisingly short space of time that usually intervenes between her innumerable daily visits to the den was accounted for, and, in the light thrown upon the subject by my discovery, I understood why she trained her babies in and around the house-maples. Many a time, since that notable spring morning, I have watched her as she led

her tottering little ones out through the tiny door; and more than once, at the close of a fatiguing day, I have seen her carry them in her mouth to the safe shelter of the roof home. From this height the tender little things fall sometimes to rise no more; or again, after a few seconds of helplessness or unconsciousness, to courageously pick themselves up and resume the interrupted journey.

Madame Jolie-Queue's front door is her only means of exit and entrance. I must do her the justice to say that she has never attempted to establish communication between her quarters and ours; an act of forbearance for which we are truly grateful to her.

Among all the dwellings placed in the trees of the grove for the accommodation of squirrels, the most capa-

cious and pretentious is the one occupied by a redcoat known as the robber baron. Tiny turrets and balconies, fanciful doors and windows, ornamental roofs and gables, make this little house the delight of every child who beholds it. The establishment appears to be generously provisioned and comfortably furnished, but I fear that both provender and furnishings represent ill-gotten goods, for the baron has a way of making a descent on passing squirrels and levying a tax on their supplies. He is a most resentful and aggressive fellow, and, when not raiding, he may usually be seen standing at his castle door, as if on the watch for some affront. The angriest and most threatening chattering greets even the distant approach of his fellows. I am happy to say that neither this hostile gentleman, nor his

almost equally hostile wife, patronizes my restaurant. Perhaps they are deterred by a wholesome fear of Madame Jolie-Queue.

To our way of thinking, the nobility of the colony is represented by the little princess of the Tower; a beautiful, graceful squirrel who fell into the hands of human beings in her helpless babyhood, and was cared for by them until able to provide for herself. Much of the shyness of the woods characterizes her, in spite of the fact that she received her early training from humans, and that she deigns to dwell in a human shelter. For notwithstanding her attempts to keep the matter secret, it is known that she holds her court and brings up her families between the walls of the ivy-covered tower.

At a respectful distance from the

baron's castle is a box-like structure, relieved by not even a shadow of ornamentation and boasting of only one door and two windows. But in spite of the unassuming appearance of this dwelling, I verily believe that it represents the wealthiest squirrel couple in the colony. The sides of the plain little house fairly bulge out with the pressure of closely packed supplies, and through the tiny crevices, which, in this case at least, represent opulence, not poverty, one may obtain glimpses of spruce and pine-cone supplies, of nuts, and wadding, and rags, and all the other articles that go to the making of squirrel wealth.

Often while I follow the graceful and amusing antics of my little red-coated friends, I speculate regarding the wisdom and safety of attempting to introduce another element into the colony.

What a delight it would be to watch the intimate life of the beautiful, aristocratic gray squirrels; their working and playing, their home-making and housekeeping and the training of their young. What a pleasure to have the window-sill patronage and consequent close friendship of these gentle creatures as well as of my present patrons. Is such a plan feasible? Red squirrels are said to be relentless enemies of the gray. Would the saucy independent little freeholders of the grove tolerate the presence of another branch of their family?

But if I could obtain a pair of young gray squirrels, cage-born and cage-bred (I would never knowingly countenance the cruel practice of trapping and imprisoning wild creatures), if I were to give my little captives the freedom of the den and an opportunity of meeting

the red squirrel within its safe precincts and of becoming acquainted with the enemies' tactics while still under my protection, would not my gray protégés be well enough equipped after a winter of such training to venture out among the redcoats and to take up life in the woods, especially as the den would always be available in case a necessity should arise for beating a retreat?

I wonder.

CONSTERNATION AMONG THE COLONISTS

From his ambush in the oak-tree
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo.

The Song of Hiawatha.

III

CONSTERNATION AMONG THE COLONISTS

Not many days after the one on which I made the foregoing entry, an unusual scene might have been witnessed at the restaurant sill. The window was open, the wire-screen removed, and the well-stocked nut basket in full view, yet the hitherto dauntless Jolie-Queue stood outside as if not daring to enter. Amazement and perplexity were written all over the little face and form. She stood on tiptoe, her paws tightly clasped to her breast, her eyes big with wonder and dismay. Thus she remained for a few seconds as if paralyzed by her emotions, and at the close of her investigation she

scampered wildly away without bestowing a single glance in the direction of the nuts.

And now for the cause of her surprise and discomfiture.

On a table which had been placed in a broad belt of sunshine stood a fine, roomy cage, and from a mound of dry leaves and wadding in a corner of the cage two squirrel heads peeped out in the direction of the provision window. At every shadow of an alarm the heads hastily withdrew to the depths of the mound, but after a reassuring period of quiet they would again appear, and the large dark eyes would blink blissfully in the sun, while the sensitive noses quivered as if in keen enjoyment of the forest air.

But neither sound nor movement frightened them under certain condi-



Drawn from a photograph

MADAME JOLIE-QUEUE'S DISCRETION.

tions. My little dog might bark her loudest in the near neighborhood of their cage without disturbing them in the least, and the appearance of Madame Jolie-Queue and her fellows seemed to excite in them neither curiosity nor alarm. But, at the sight of a human form or the sound of a human voice, they were panic-stricken, and it was only by remaining motionless long enough to delude or disarm them, that I now and then obtained a glimpse of the terrified little creatures—two gray squirrels, the gift of a friend who wished to aid me in the experiment of introducing these outsiders to our redcoats.

But on the day of the presentation all the wild squirrels, with one exception, turned away in alarm from the window at the sight of my new protégés, and returned no more till the following

morning. The exception was Julius, a grandson of Madame Jolie-Queue's. This dapper young fellow has the distinction of being named after the famous Roman General whose nose his own resembles. I think that the inquisitive little creature must have made as many as thirty trips to the provision window during the hour that followed his discovery of the strangers. And even when twilight had merged into darkness and the study light was burning and the little woodfolk supposed to be snugly tucked away in their night shelters, I heard a slight sound at the restaurant window, and on looking out I saw the wondering face of Julius pressed against the window pane. He was evidently pursued by the mystery of the cage and its inhabitants. The dark woods made a sombre background

for the tiny figure, and it almost seemed as if I ought to open the window and let him enter, that he might share the warmth and shelter of the room; but after a short inspection he turned toward the forest and bounded fearlessly into the shadows; the paths through the trees appearing to be almost as familiar to him in the darkness as in the daylight.

The graycoats who caused such consternation and surprise in the squirrel colony had not been obtained without difficulty. The friend who procured them for me had gone from one New York dealer to another, in whose establishments many furred and feathered pets are to be found; but again and again, when inquiring for gray squirrels, she was met with the statement that they could not be obtained, as a fine of fifty dollars is the penalty for selling them,

and twenty for having them in one's possession.

The news of this protective measure was welcome indeed, even if it meant defeat to my plan; for through the enforcement of such laws the cruel practice of trapping and imprisoning the denizens of the woods must be greatly decreased and may eventually be abolished.

But my friend's endeavors were not to result in failure, for after many inquiries as to the legitimate manner of proceeding, she was directed to a dealer authorized to sell gray squirrels to naturalists, heads of schools and others of like standing, who wish to make a friendly, helpful study of the little creatures, and who may be relied upon to provide wisely for their comfort and happiness. The squirrels are either cage-born and reared, the dealer said, or

else taken from the nest when so young as to have gained no knowledge of the meaning of freedom; hence captivity, in itself, has no terrors for them.

Four males represented the dealer's entire stock of gray squirrels, and, as my purpose was classed by him under the head of proper conditions, two of the quartette were sold to my friend, and transferred from the great noisy city to my quiet den with its forest outlook.

"I have brought you two gentlemen," my aide-de-camp exclaimed as she entered with the travellers; and, as the remark suggested Shakespeare's immortal Veronese, the names of Valentine and Proteus were then and there bestowed upon the newcomers.

The poor little creatures had been lively with fright during the early part of their journey hitherward, and the larger

and elder had nearly eaten his way through the cardboard box in which they were incarcerated; but alarming quiet reigned after this attempt was frustrated, and when they arrived at their destination and the box was opened, two limp, motionless, gray bodies were disclosed, and the alarm went out that the poor little strangers were dead. Much lamentation and remorseful speculation followed this announcement, but a liberty taken with one of the beautiful tails —a tender and regretful stroking and caressing—had an electrifying effect on its owners. This influence, in turn, communicated itself to the other occupant of the box and revealed the reassuring fact that the case had been one of panic only. Almost simultaneously with the friendly touch, both strangers started up and began a wild search for a hiding place.

They were with difficulty caught and placed in a cage, where they hastily betook themselves to the sheltered corner that represented their beds. Two transfers have since been made; each time to a larger and more commodious cage, and each time to the increased consternation of the gentlemen in gray, as well as to the accompaniment of much biting and scratching resistance.

For days after their arrival they would appear only to seize provisions or when they fancied themselves unobserved; and it was generally from the depths of their sleeping apartment that we heard the nibbling and filing of nuts. Occasionally sounds of disquiet and quarrelling reached us from this same dark corner; squeaking expostulations which, I soon learned, proceeded from Proteus, the younger inhabitant of the

cage, and deep, threatening growls from Valentine, the elder.

But I was not satisfied with this unsociable state of affairs and determined to find a way of ingratiating myself in the favor of my shy pensioners. I felt assured that the road to these little creatures' affections lay through the same channels by which a homely old adage asserts that a man's heart may be reached. Biscuit, bread and nuts, they would seize and carry to the depths of their bed. My object was to find something that would keep them in sight while they were eating, and it was almost by accident that the solution of the difficulty came. One day the proximity of a bottle of malted milk suggested a trial of its contents. I took a pinch of the powder and spread it on the upper shelf of the cage. I then retired to my

observation corner to await developments. When all was quiet, the squirrels emerged, made their way to the shelf, sniffed inquiringly, and then fairly fell upon the powder. In their eagerness they pushed and jostled each other, remonstrating loudly the while, and, even when I came out from my hiding place, they did not withdraw. It is true that they rushed threateningly to the side of the cage and hissed and chattered their disapproval of me, but even this hostile reception was an advance towards friendliness. The first victory had been won.

While the squirrels were still making angry lunges in my direction, I placed some malted milk on the end of a slender stick, and carefully inserted it between the cage bars. In making a furious dash at the stick they sniffed the

powder, when, presto, the scene changed. Instead of being feared and hated, I was greeted as a benefactress and recognized as purveyor to their grayships; and in a short time both gentlemen were eating from my fingers. After three or four trials of the milk food, Proteus seemed to lose his taste for it, but Valentine still continued to eat his daily portion with the greatest relish.

Working along the line of this success, I tried to lure my lodgers from their little home that they might enjoy the liberty of the den; but all in vain. They are satisfied with their limited quarters, and positively refuse to leave their gilded prison.

A HOME-MADE FOREST

Here in glade and dingle sweet
You may find a snug retreat:
Can ye wish for softer bed
Than the moss that here is spread?

An Invocation—PHILIP DAYRE.

IV

A HOME-MADE FOREST

Several beautiful, summer-like days followed the comparative taming of the gray squirrels; days during which the windows of the den were left open and the little captives could look into the forest depths, hear the rustling of dry leaves, feel the soft breath of the woods and watch the swaying branches. The prisoners sniffed, listened, and gazed, as if the outdoor sights, sounds and scents were pleasant to them, and pity for their limitations and deprivations determined me to bring them as much of the forest as I could gather; so I set about furnishing their little house after mother na-

ture's own methods and with her own materials.

First I strewed the floor of the cage with small branches of spruce and hemlock. Over this I laid a thick carpet of dry, fragrant leaves. Here and there—from side to side and end to end of the little dwelling I placed various strong, rough-coated boughs, and smooth twigs with sweet buds of promise at their tips. One corner I sodded. In another, down among the leaves and earth, I arranged a pebbly bed in which I sunk a crystal cup. This represents the spring, and a pretty sight it is when the little heads dip into its depths. In still another corner I placed the large mound of wadding and dry leaves in which the squirrels take their naps, and I have roofed the cage with thick branches of spruce,

pine and hemlock, to some of which the highly-prized cones still cling.

The outdoor squirrels rustle through the leaves, scamper over the boughs, gaze up into the treetops, drink from the spring, and bury their treasures in tree-angles and leafy nooks, and my little captives emulate them in every particular. They, also, frisk and sport, and bury treasure, and scamper among the dry leaves, and hang from branches, and leap from bough to bough, and chase each other through the intricacies of their tiny forest, and dip their little noses in a clear spring, and look up into the evergreen boughs, and revel in many of the delights of freedom without incurring any of its risks.

When the fragrant boughs were placed on the top of the cage, Valentine went scampering along, upside down,

among them in a perfect frenzy of delight. When Proteus first found himself in a section of good red shale, he gayly tossed little clumps of soil into the air, then seized upon a dry leaf with which he whirled around and danced, and, in every way, manifested his joy in the new surroundings.

"Inherited tastes and instincts," I exclaimed at sight of all this glee, but a wise friend who overheard my observation remarked: "Beware of speaking confidently regarding matters with which we are so little acquainted. How much do we know of the motives that actuate even our own hearts? How far can we penetrate into the inmost thoughts of those with whom we are best acquainted? And as for beings like these squirrels, separated from us by such a wide gulf, how is it possible for us to fathom their

thoughts or interpret their impulses, except when circumstances render them so obvious as to be unmistakable? Might not your pets have manifested for some manufactured, some foreign article, the same joy that they have evinced in these outdoor furnishings?"

A day or so after this little episode, I placed in the squirrels' cage a small willow stump. There was an aperture in its side where some little creature seemed once to have made its home. Soft bark, tiny dead twigs and delicate roots and tendrils still clung to it. I thought it the choicest of forest treasures and presented it to my squirrels with every assurance of its being joyfully accepted.

But lo, at sight of the stump they were filled with dismay, and fled to the depths of their mound, and it required many days of patient educating to induce them to tolerate the presence of my trophy.

ENTER DISCORD

An' muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud an' lang.

—ROBERT BURNS.

They struggle and they strive,
Droop—lag—and then revive.

Elf of the Woodlands.

—R. H. HORNE.

V

ENTER DISCORD

Now had I not every reason to look for the most harmonious results from the construction of this squirrel Eden? Alas, strife entered in less than a week after my lodgers had been introduced to the delights of the home-made forest. From morning till night there are sounds of wrangling and scenes of contention, and even long after the little fellows ought to be journeying through the happy hunting-grounds of dreamland, pitiful squeaks and expostulations and stern growls and reproofs are heard in the snug little dormitory corner. Valentine seems to take positive delight in tyrannizing over and annoying his jun-

ior. The poor little victim still wears the downy coat of extreme youth, and his movements are characterized by a slight unsteadiness which testifies to the fact that he has but recently been thrown on his own resources. It is quite an achievement for him to gnaw through a nut-shell, yet time and again, after he has accomplished the difficult feat and has settled down with evident satisfaction to enjoy the result of his labors, a strong paw reaching stealthily out from behind has stolen around his neck, the patiently prepared nut has been wrested from his grasp, and the tyrannical Valentine has scampered off with his ill-gotten gains, which he triumphantly and shamelessly devours in full view of his poor little fag. I have never seen discouragement and helpless indignation more clearly portrayed than in the face



Drawn from a photograph

DISCORD IN THE DORMITORY.

of Proteus on these raiding occasions, while Valentine seems fairly to exult in his wicked power; and any remonstrance on the part of the injured one, any attempt to regain his property, always meets with severe reproof and chastisement from the robber.

One would suppose that Proteus might be allowed to take his little meal in peace, when Valentine has dined, but the tyrant generally insists on having the table cleared, that is all supplies buried, the moment his own appetite is satisfied. The world knows no hunger after he has dined. Have you ever met his counterpart among human beings?

Of course I always make it a point to see that the little oppressed one gets enough to eat, but it is sometimes by strategy that I accomplish my purpose. For instance, when Proteus has fared

unusually ill at the hands of Valentine, I engage the latter's attention by giving him a feast of malted milk, in the devouring of which dainty his nose, paws, whiskers, and even his jaunty waistcoat become more or less moist and sticky. But during the extensive after-dinner toilet which this uncomfortable state of affairs necessitates, Proteus is enabled to enjoy a leisurely, ample, and unmolested meal. Sometimes I give the little fellow a cracked nut or two, standing guard while he eats; but these dainties must be dispensed sparingly, as the nibbling and filing of nuts is an exercise highly beneficial to a squirrel's teeth, which, without these dental calisthenics, would grow to such lengths as to become finally useless and no doubt very painful. As I am anxious to do all in my power toward preparing my gray-

coats for the time when they are to take up life among the independent outdoor folk, I often restrain the promptings of my heart and forbear coming to the rescue of Proteus.

Even the character of the play of my new protégés has changed of late. The merry gambols of earlier days have been superseded by a nagging, teasing kind of sport, and by something which seems to partake of the nature of practical jokes; in every case, Proteus being the victim. Sometimes the poor little fellow, while hanging on by his hind feet to an upstairs bough, will reach down to the basement of the cage and be unsuspectingly foraging with his forepaws for treasure hidden among the leaves, when a sharp nip at his hind legs or a vicious tug at his tail will suddenly summon his head to the rescue of his heels.

His habitual expression is one of anxiety and discouragement, while the rascal Valentine has an appearance of wicked satisfaction.

I have really been much puzzled as to the best manner of proceeding with these uncongenial gentlemen. The cage door is left open during a part of each day in the hope that they may be tempted to step out of their prison; for in the larger liberty of the room, Proteus would have better opportunities to elude his persecutor. A wire-screen door has been placed at the point where my den communicates with the main part of the house, so that, if the strangers' fancy should lead them to roam around my study, they may do so without the risk of straying away and coming to harm. But the screen door, and all other such precautions, ap-

pear needless, for the captives absolutely refuse to cross their own threshold.

Occasionally, when conditions are safe for the gray squirrels, I open the windows that the redcoats may enter; but nowadays, few seem desirous to avail themselves of this privilege. Julius, Feather-Tip, and—strange to say—Rufus, show most curiosity and least fear; but Madame Jolie-Queue keeps well in the background. She is so disconcerted or so annoyed by the gray squirrels' occupancy of my den, that she seems to have forgotten to discipline Rufus, and the sly fellow is gleefully taking advantage of the respite. He has even shown spirit enough to advance to the strangers' cage; thrusting both nose and paws through the bars in an attempt to secure supplies. But Valentine's violent and vigorous repulses are discour-

aging to marauders, and it is not likely that his storehouse will suffer frequent attacks.

Feather-Tip, the dainty little mate of Julius, is the most beautiful of my window-sill visitors. Her ears are not only well covered with fur, but are also surmounted by two coquettish little red tufts. Hence her name.

Gray squirrels may have the advantage when tails come under consideration, but their bare and rat-like ears and their long noses compare unfavorably with the well-furred ears and chubby faces of their red-coated cousins, and Valentine and Proteus appear to the greatest disadvantage whenever that embodiment of grace and fairy-like motion —Feather-Tip—visits their neighborhood. In order to show themselves at their best, gray squirrels require free-

dom, with its untrammelled opportunities for graceful action; but how shall I ever succeed in introducing my graycoats to the freedom of outdoors, when they even refuse to accept that of my den?

THE RETURN OF THE EXILE

Buried were all warlike weapons,
And the war-cry was forgotten.

The Song of Hiawatha.

VI

THE RETURN OF THE EXILE

An unusual thing has happened since I made the foregoing entry. Valentine has twice crossed the threshold—once by means of a decoy, once voluntarily—and in consequence of these manœuvres there is a truce to all hostilities, and, for the present, at least, harmony reigns in the little homes. This is how it all came to pass:

Yesterday the wise friend already alluded to remarked, on witnessing one of Valentine's tyrannical demonstrations: "Unless you separate those squirrels, the larger will do serious harm to the smaller. There is real danger in

your proposed plan of allowing them to fight the affair out."

Taking alarm at this statement I determined to lose no time in carrying out my friend's suggestion; so I immediately set about furnishing a second cage with boughs and branches and all the comfortable appointments of the larger cage, or homestead. By late afternoon the annex was ready, even to a tiny dish of malted milk placed invitingly in evidence. I then arranged the cages in such a manner that the open door of one should come against the open door of the other. Valentine looked on dubiously until he spied the malted milk within easy reach, when he eagerly stepped into the annex and I secured my prisoner.

His indignation was great when he discovered that he had been decoyed

away from Proteus, and during the entire remnant of daylight he sought to make his way out of jail, evidently with the intention of returning to his old home.

Proteus at first appeared to enjoy his independence heartily, but after a time it became evident that he longed for his tyrannical companion. I was at a loss to know what to do, and when evening came and each had settled down in his lonely bed, I began seriously to reconsider the matter of allowing them again to occupy the same cage. But "night brings counsel," I said to myself, "I will put away all thought of the matter till to-morrow," and with the morning came a strange, though perhaps but a temporary, solution of the problem.

The first passer who looked through the screen door saw that the annex was

empty and that Valentine was at large. The poor exile was clambering wildly over the cage from which he had been banished; Proteus following him around on the inside, and now and then extending his little arms through the bars, as if with the friendly intent of aiding his companion to enter. It really was a pathetic scene, and one not to be prolonged, so I opened the door of the homestead and guided the wanderer to the entrance. Proteus rushed to meet him and put both his little paws around the tyrant's face, which he kissed and caressed with every demonstration of delight and affection. Valentine rather patronizingly returned the caresses and seemed more than happy to find himself once more in the familiar homestead.

The day has passed in good-natured play and frolic, the repasts have been

eaten without any show of tyranny or despotism, and the old harmonious era seems to have returned. Will this peaceful state of affairs last? Is Valentine's reformation a thorough one? To these questions I can only say, I hope so; and as I look toward the mound of leaves and wadding where the tired, happy little creatures are snugly curled up for the night, I seem to find an assurance that the days of strife are ended.

EXIT VALENTINE

And the melancholy fir-trees
Waved their dark green fans above him;
Waved their purple cones above him.

The Song of Hiawatha.

VII

EXIT VALENTINE

On setting out to write this little chronicle, I determined that it should, at least, have the merit of being a truthful one, and in each of the foregoing entries I have endeavored to adhere strictly to facts. At the present juncture it is necessary for me to face myself with this statement, in order not to revise, to Valentine's unqualified credit, that portion of the record which deals with his misdemeanors; for in the tender glamour which now surrounds his wrong-doings, they seem but as merry pranks or lovable failings.

On the evening of the happy day in which he returned from exile, I left him

and his little companion comfortably tucked up in their warm bed, but on the following morning Proteus alone was visible when I entered the den. He sat in a corner, unmolestedly nibbling a nut; a melancholy and rather alarming spectacle, especially as an ominous quiet reigned in the dormitory quarter where I knew Valentine must be hidden. I opened the cage door and drew away one soft covering after another, until at last I came upon the little fellow. He was still curled up in the depths of his bed, but he was stiff and cold and had probably been dead for hours.

My heart smote me as I lifted the lifeless little form from the cot. Was I not in a manner responsible for his death? But for the time of exile might he not still have been his merry, lively, roguish self? Yet had he not been ban-

ished, what would have been the fate of the gentle Proteus?

In making his escape from prison did Valentine inflict some internal injury on himself? Not a scratch, not a bruise, not a mark of any kind testified to outward hurt. Yet could he have breakfasted, dined, supped and frisked all through the happy day had he received mortal injury? During the time that intervened between his escape and our discovery of his flight did he perhaps pick up and eat some hurtful thing, the influence of which did not make itself felt at first, but which cut short his little life even while he slept? Had he discovered and feasted on my store of hemp and other rich seeds which I scatter broadcast on biting days for the benefit of the hardy outdoor folk? Had he partaken too freely of his favorite dainty, the

malted milk, a generous portion of which graced the board in honor of his return?

Was it any one or two of these causes or a combination of them all that brought about his death, we asked each other again and again. But in vain we canvassed and discussed the question. No one could answer it. We could be certain of one thing only: the bright-eyed, joyous, mischievous creature had gone, and in his place was a pathetically still little form, with half-closed, lifeless eyes. The days of strife were indeed ended.

We dug his grave out under the beautiful pines where we had hoped he would one day race and frolic with a little mate. The summer trees were bare; but among the garments they had doffed we found a few yellow leaves, and with these and bits of evergreen we

lined his little bed. The autumn winds sighed gently as we drew the kindly earth over the tiny grave, and from a nearby tree, as if in lament for a lost comrade, a robin sang one of those rare, late-autumn dirges. Though I listen eagerly each fall of the year for this farewell song from the robin, I have heard it but on few occasions. Its tender melancholy was most impressive in this case.

When I took his dead playmate from the cage, Proteus—forgetful of all his former fears with regard to the dangers that might await him on the other side of the bars—followed his comrade out into the room, and again, as on the evening of the return from exile, put his little paws around his companion's face and caressed him tenderly. But after a while, as there came no response from

the quiet figure, he ceased and went away. Once or twice he returned to the little form, which he sniffed rather timidly, as if with some vague apprehension of the meaning of the hopeless quiet, after which he abandoned his companion and went forth to explore his new world.

The little Chihuahua dog, Fifine, bright, eager eyes, every muscle of her cushion she was looking at him with bright, eager eyes; every muscle of her sensitive frame quivering with excitement, but whether with friendly interest or not it was difficult to decide. However, as she is a dog who is always ready to listen to reason, I proceeded to lay the case before her. This tiny gray creature was *a good little dog,* not to be harmed but to be treated with the utmost gentleness and consideration. She followed my discourse carefully, her

head turning from side to side as each point was emphasized, and at the close of the lecture, when I held her toward the squirrel, they rubbed noses in the most affable manner.

Then began a series of delightful gambols. Fifine frisked all about her new playmate, wagging her tail wildly; now crouching as if for a fearful spring; now backing away, apparently inviting pursuit; again standing erect after the manner of a lion rampant and waving her forepaws over the squirrel's head. In fact, in every way testifying her thorough approval of him, and her desire to be on friendly terms.

Proteus' response was a mild one, nevertheless it was evident that he liked his doggie friend, and at the end of the game, when she retired to her basket, he carried his little lunch to her neighbor-

hood, and ate it while she looked benevolently on. The early part of each morning sees a repetition of their pretty gambols.

But play is not of paramount importance with Proteus yet. He loves to explore the den; every crevice in the floor, every inch of the rug, tables, chairs, each article of furniture, myself included, seeming to possess great interest for him, but beyond everything else, his fancy is taken by the wall paper. It has, for his little palate, charms which rival those of the choicest nuts. Standing on tiptoe in order to reach above the surbase, he licks and licks the dangerous stuff, and often desists only when I pull him away by main force. I have constructed for him an elevated railway leading from his cage to my table, the window-sill and various other comparatively lofty points.



Drawn from a photograph

A FRIENDLY LUNCHEON.

I have placed beside his cage a genuine, many-branched tree which reaches from floor to ceiling, but alas, it is where the branches or the elevated railway stations come in contact with the wall paper that his greatest interest centres, and his most numerous pilgrimages are made.

Now that he knows something of the meaning of freedom, he strongly objects to being caged except at night or during his day naps. Yet unless I can find some remedy for the wall paper habit, he will be obliged to return to captivity. Otherwise I fear my next entry may be headed,

EXIT PROTEUS

LITTLE MAN

With little legs straddling,
He dances about—
Pretends to be waddling—
Then leaps with a flout
At something he sees in the bright-quiet air.

* * * * *

He dances, he prances,
Gives hiccups and kick-ups,
But all without noise is his merriment made.

Elf of the Woodlands.

—R. H. HORNE.

VIII

LITTLE MAN

Proteus did not die, nor has he again been incarcerated, yet the wall-paper habit is a thing of the past. It was necessary to adopt a heroic course of treatment in order to bring about a cure, however, for the evil, though of short standing, was a deep-seated one. Various blurred, meaningless stretches in the pattern of the wall paper still indicate the route over which the busy little tongue travelled, but one would have to see the ravaged territory in order to realize the extent of the depredations. The marvel is that the little creature escaped being poisoned.

My first attempt at a cure was not a

success. I scattered red pepper around the surbases, window-sills and other points where ledges or bits of framework aided my undertaking, but the individual for whom these warm precautions had been made seemed little affected by them. Perhaps the tiny tongue passed over the paper with slightly abated relish after the red pepper treatment, but the difference was not important; almost imperceptible in fact. As frequently happens, however, the innocent suffered for the guilty, for the little dog and I were suddenly seized with symptoms of acute influenza, and on our account the severe trial was cut short.

My experimental genius next led me to test the effect of a weak solution of mustard and water, and with this unique pigment I decorated the baseboards and even attempted a few designs on the

paper itself at points to which my gray-coated friend resorted most persistently. I am happy to say that little of this artistic work was needed, for, at the first taste of the mustard, Proteus rushed wildly away from the decorated corner, coughing and sneezing as if in no little distress, and from that day to the present he has manifested no interest in the wall paper.

I cannot tell just how it came about, but shortly after the death of Valentine we dropped the formal name of Proteus, and substituted for it the endearing and much more appropriate appellation of Little Man.

It is difficult to realize that the trusting creature has ever stood in awe of us, for his confidence and friendliness are now unbounded. Nor was there any question of winning his trust. It

was given at the moment when he followed his dead playmate out from the cage into the little world represented by my den. And while I, as his purveyor and companion, seem to be his favorite among humans, he has nevertheless a place in his heart for each member of the family, and affectionate demonstrations greet their every approach. Early each morning we find him, either just emerging from his cage with a view of hurrying to meet us, or waiting at the screen door, on the alert for a douceur or a caress. Sometimes, in order to test his friendliness and fearlessness, a threatening hand or a formidable stick is raised above his head or brought menacingly toward him. But neither for hand nor cudgel in its swiftest and most alarming descent does the little fellow swerve one iota. Indeed he generally grasps one

or the other and examines it eagerly, probably seeing in all the demonstration nothing beyond a frolic or a possibility of bounty.

Now and then as I sit at my desk engrossed in a book or busy with my pen, I will feel a slight pull at my sleeve, and on looking down I meet the appealing glance of Little Man's soft brown eyes. It is almost as if he were reproaching me with having forgotten his presence.

Again a nut will be pushed under my elbow, and the piece of paper on which I am writing will be gently but firmly drawn from my grasp and carefully laid over the hidden treasure, after which the covering receives many a little pat by way of making assurance doubly sure. Sometimes the folds of my dress serve for temporary storehouses; again nuts are pried and packed all around my feet,

until, in my hedged-in condition, I am strongly reminded of the limitations of prisoners in the stocks. At times I am suddenly sent limping on my way through having come in violent contact with unsuspected treasure tucked carefully under the edges of the rug. Nuts drop from envelopes, roll out from between books, fall from curtain-tops and crunch under rockers. Indeed, there is only one place in my den where they may not be looked for, and that is in Fifine's basket bed. Were Little Man permitted to follow his inclinations in the matter, he would soon convert her soft cushions into cobblestone beds, but as her basket is placed beyond his reach when we are absent from the room, and carefully guarded by its owner while we are present, all attempts at securing it for a storehouse have so far proved unavailing.

There is a slight coolness between Fifine and Little Man nowadays. They have their occasional friendly gambols, and doggie manifests much interest in her squirrel companion's gymnastic and other exercises, but he has incurred her displeasure by his fondness for settling down on my lap. Though generally tolerant of his fancies, she resents this familiarity as a direct infringement on her own rights, and unless I can keep his presence a secret while he honors me thus, I am compelled to transfer him from my lap to my shoulder, my writing-table or some other near and desirable but neutral point. Otherwise war would immediately be declared.

Fifine has still another, though a lesser, grievance against Little Man. It relates to his desire—which never reaches fulfillment—of taking his naps beside her

in her basket bed. The couch is large enough to accommodate three or four Chihuahua dogs, to say nothing of a tiny creature like Little Man, but doggie has ever resented intrusion of this nature, and will have none of his companionship in her basket.

But other matters beside the burying of treasure or skirmishing with Fifine occupy the happy Little Man's attention. There is his tree—the wonderful many-branched, genuine forest tree—among the boughs of which he leaps and whirls and hangs by his hind feet, and in ever so many ways plays at being an out-door squirrel. There is a long, hollow tree-trunk in which he frequently disappears, perhaps suddenly to come to view at the opposite end of the tunnel; again, as if in feigned terror of some invisible enemy, rushing madly

back to hide in the friendly depths of the hollow until such times as the withdrawal of his enemy shall make his reappearance safe. There are his forest toys: rose-haws, interesting pebbles, pine and spruce cones, bits of moss, pieces of bark, and all sorts of odds and ends which I bring from my outings in the woods. There are the delightful sofa cushions, among which he hides and around which he plays tag with invisible playmates. There is my table with its wonderful stores of pens, pencils, erasers and papers, and last, but not least, there is his own coat; the beautiful new coat which first appeared in patches, gradually banishing the baby frock, but which now envelopes the entire little body; the softest, prettiest gray garment imaginable.

The care of this coat and of the

beautiful tail occupies no small portion of Little Man's time, and appears to afford him great pleasure. Ennui finds no place in this little friend's life. His days are well and happily filled; indeed I sometimes wonder if he will ever again know quite such immunity from trouble or quite so much happiness as during the time that he spends in my den with no other companions than the Chihuahua dog and myself, and the imaginary enemies and playmates with whom he peoples his home-made forest and plays his wonderful games.

WINDOW-SILL VISITORS

Day by day, o'er tower and turret,
In foul weather and in fair,
Day by day in vaster numbers,
Flocked the poets of the air.
Walter von der Vogelweid.

—LONGFELLOW.

IX.

WINDOW-SILL VISITORS

One of the Little Man's favorite lunch-counters is the window-sill, on the outer side of which my pensioners from the woods assemble. Now a chickadee alights on one of the evergreen branches which form a sort of shelter around the outer window-frame, and, from a crotch in a bough, he takes a cracked nut or a bit of cruller; for supplies of each await him here daily. Again a quank, quank announces the presence of a nuthatch, and from among the many dainties the friendly little bird selects a sunflower seed with which he flies to a nearby tree, where he inserts the seed securely in a bark crevice in order to hammer

or *hatch* it open with his strong little bill. Slate-colored juncos, or snowbirds, come in small flocks and scratch among the window provisions for their favorite hempseed. Needless to say that English sparrows make their way to the feast, and now and then a sparrow hawk, from his perch on a telephone wire or a neighboring tree, looks wistfully toward the banqueters. Occasionally I catch a glimpse of a cardinal's proud crest and beautiful red coat. Woodpeckers—hairy and downy—and myrtle warblers, often visit the trees which the window-sill restaurant faces. Kinglets are constantly hovering around its neighborhood, and although winter, full fledged, is with us now, the bluebird's call is still heard and the charming little creatures frequently lunch among the rose-haws

in the bushes plainly visible from my table d'hôte.

Not long ago, during one of our grayest, coldest days, an oil stove which had received a very odorous and an all too generous coat of polish was lighted and placed outdoors in order to give both smoke and odor an opportunity of spending themselves. I passed the stove on my way to the woods, and as I stopped a moment before it to warm my benumbed fingers, I wondered if, to chance passers, the thought might occur that we were attempting the humane but hardly practicable plan of warming outdoors for the benefit of the birds and squirrels. On my return from the forest outing, what was my surprise to find the stove surrounded by a company of juncos and English sparrows. There were perhaps thirty-five or forty on the little ice-

island in the centre of which the stove stood, and they were regarding the cheerful glow with every appearance of appreciation and enjoyment. No doubt, on that cold gray day, the oil stove played for them the part of a miniature sun.

Among the window-sill visitors, none are more faithful in their attendance than the red squirrels. The appearance of the gray stranger no longer arouses in them either surprise or dismay, and his interest in them is of the same passive nature. Often, as he sits quietly nibbling nuts on his side of the sill, a red cousin, separated from him by nothing but a pane of glass, partakes unconcernedly of the banquet spread on the outer sill.

But the privilege of entering the den at their pleasure no longer belongs to

the redcoats. Their right of way expired when Little Man accepted the freedom of the room. Occasionally a red squirrel face peering wonderingly in at the closed window seems to demand the explanation of this persistently inhospitable proceeding and recalls to my mind the fact that I am doing absolutely nothing towards furthering the acquaintance between the wild squirrels and my little gray friend. Yet, if he is one day to take up life among them, it would be well for him to set about learning their ways and preparing his defences as early as possible. But the experiment which appeared so feasible in the days when I laid my earliest plans for introducing gray squirrels into the colony is by no means an easy one to carry out. In canvassing the situation I am frequently reminded of an old-time puzzle which

sets forth the quandary of a man who stands at one side of a river wondering how he can transport to the other the property which he has in charge: a fox, a goose and a bushel of corn. His boat cannot accommodate himself and his entire load. He will be compelled to make a separate journey for each commodity; yet on no account must the goose be left to the mercies of the fox, nor the corn to the discretion of the goose. What is the perplexed man to do?

If, in order to allow the red squirrels to enter, I open the windows of my den, how can I be assured that the spirit of investigation will not tempt Little Man to make his exit, and when he once finds himself in the beautiful outer world will he ever return to me? Would he not be overpowered by the army of redcoats, or, escaping these enemies, perish of cold

and hunger? Under any circumstances the winter season would be a cruel one in which to make the experiment of turning him adrift, yet is there no means by which, while hindering his outgoing, I could permit the redcoats to enter? The man of fox, goose and corn fame found a way out of his difficulty. There surely must be some solution for my small problem.

LITTLE MAN RECEIVES

And to the fairy court they went,
With mickle joy and merriment,
Which thing was done with good intent;
And thus I left them feasting.

Nymphidia—MICHAEL DRAYTON.

X

LITTLE MAN RECEIVES

The simple solution has at last presented itself to my mind, and in consequence of this fact a carpenter spent a busy half-hour at the bird and squirrel restaurant yesterday. The result of his visit is as follows:

When the window is closed, a thick board, attached by hinges to the under part of the lower sash, falls like a second inner sill over the original one. When the window is raised to a height of about eight inches, the attachment drops and fits snugly into the space represented by the open window. In the centre of the board is a little hinged door which falls and closes securely with the downward

swing. But the open sesame secret is revealed by a long cord attached to an eye-screw in the lower part of the door and passing on thence through a second eye-screw at the top of the window. For, when the board is in an upright position, the little door opens or closes according to the tightening or slackening of the cord, and the matter of admitting visitors without letting Little Man escape is now such a simple one that I wonder it ever puzzled me.

The first reception was held this morning while my graycoat was busy examining forest treasures by means of which I had lured him to a safe distance from the restaurant sill. My outdoor friends were not slow to avail themselves of the golden opportunity afforded by the open door. Rufus of the growing courage appeared almost simultaneously with the

pulling of the cord. He advanced cautiously at first, but seeing that Little Man paid no heed to him he helped himself to a nut and then took his departure.

The next visitor was Baby; a red squirrel not previously mentioned in these pages, although his early history as well as that of his parents is recorded elsewhere.* But it is through no oversight, no lack of appreciation, that his name has not yet figured in this chronicle, but rather because the present peaceable character of his life affords little material for signal notice. However, his quiet, gentle ways merit the highest of loving and honorable mentions.

For aught I know to the contrary, he may be a grandfather by this time, yet we still call him by the name which we bestowed on him in the days of his

*"My Woodland Intimates."

babyhood; a time when universal indignation was directed against his Spartan mother and instructor, Madame Jolie-Queue. Various scars, which still testify to the hardships endured by the little fellow in the course of his strenuous bringing-up, enable us to distinguish him even at a distance.

Baby spends the greater part of his time in the grove, and, from all I can gather, he lodges at the Octagon, an apartment house patronized by several redcoats. His mate—who, by the way, is seldom seen far from the Octagon—is distinguished by an abbreviated tail; a souvenir, perhaps, of an encounter with a hawk or some other equally formidable enemy.

Baby, on entering the den, looked askance at Little Man for a moment, but meeting with slight recognition, and

certainly with no opposition, he took courage and set out on a voyage around my room. He even entered the empty cage, and, after inspecting it, proceeded to the table where refreshments were served for the guests. But in the height of his enjoyment he was startled and driven out by Julius and Feather-Tip, who came bounding into the room, bringing with them pleasant suggestions of their bracing, frosty outdoors.

The visit of this lively couple is noteworthy owing to the fact that it elicited a remark from their host. For a few nights after Valentine died, Little Man seemed to be the victim of nightmares. On several occasions as I sat in the den after he had betaken himself to his cot for the night, I heard the old-time squeaks and protests and appeals, and I concluded that the little sleeper fancied

himself pursued, overtaken and called upon to surrender his phantom treasures. But a hand placed reassuringly around the warm little body always dispelled the disagreeable illusion and gave him an opportunity to set out on a new route in dreamland.

Little Man, although somewhat shy with strangers, always courts caressing touches from members of the family; but it is after he has betaken himself to his cot that he shows the greatest appreciation of a course of massage. At this off-guard time, even stranger hands find an opportunity to caress the unsuspecting little bundle of fur buried in the warm bed of wadding.

The nightmares ceased—at least there was no outward evidence of their continuing—a few days after the reign of terror was over, and all through the weeks



Drawn from a photograph

that have intervened, Little Man's voice has never been heard until this morning, when he raised it in fear, threat or protest, I cannot say which; at any rate in grave disapproval of a disgraceful quarrel between Julius and Feather-Tip.

It happened that their joint choice fell upon an unusually fine chestnut, and for this treasure they strove and contended and hissed and chattered and scratched and fought, until Little Man, looking wonderingly on, dropped the nut that he was nibbling and uttered a weird sound, the ghost of a prolonged chatter. At the strange, whispered rattle, the aggressive visitors halted in amazement; then Feather-Tip seized the chestnut and dashed through the little door—Julius pursuing hotly after her—and, as Little Man appeared to be disturbed by the riot and I had no more leisure to bestow

on door-tending, I slackened the cord when the unruly visitors had departed, and Little Man's first reception was over.

The shortness of the function was evidently a relief to him, though a disappointment to the outdoor squirrels; but by one loving little heart its close was hailed with delight. Fifine had been banished during the reception, in the fear that her presence might interfere with the experiment of introducing the redcoats to the gray. Could you see her place of exile you would think banishment under the circumstances a delightful sentence. She was sent to a bay-window flooded with sunshine, and offering both a forest and a street outlook and an opportunity of entering a protest against all passing dogs. But her joy in returning to the den was unbounded. After greeting me rapturously, she

turned to Little Man. They rubbed noses in the friendliest manner; then each settled down with evident satisfaction in his or her favorite nook, while I, in my official character of chronicler to the colony, proceeded to record the events connected with this unique entertainment.

KRISS KRINGLE PROJECTS

"And when a lady's in the case,
You know all other things give place."

—GAY.

XI

KRISS KRINGLE PROJECTS

Christmas is not many days distant. The air is filled with delightful suggestions of Santa Claus mysteries, and all the children of Little Man's acquaintance insist that his small claims shall be recognized in the distribution of gifts.

"But after all, it's Christmas every day with him," said one perplexed little maiden. "He always has a tree with good things tucked away in every hiding-place; you bring him new forest toys whenever you go to the woods; his house is never without its evergreen trimmings; he has his beautiful winter coat, and I don't see what new thing you can give him."

I, also, had been busily considering the question, and my answer represented great deliberation and a careful canvassing of the matter from every point of view; but, when I finally spoke, my reply fairly electrified the company:

"I am going to give Little Man a wife!"

Such bustling preparation as followed my announcement! Such an overhauling of Little Man's house; such a search for new boughs and fresh evergreens and all the other forest furnishings that make of his domain a wholesome, pleasant woodsy nook! There was no time to be lost, for the obliging friend who had secured Valentine and his companion and who was starting cityward just as the conference adjourned undertook the delicate and difficult task of selecting and bringing home a bride for Little Man.

We hastened to have everything in readiness for her return, and as a result of our day's work three trees now group themselves around the cage, while large, bridge-like boughs are placed crosswise between them. All are carefully fastened to the table on which the cage rests, as well as to various other mooring-points in walls and ceiling. The air is filled with the fragrance of the evergreens which drape the trees and cover the cage, and bank themselves up from floor to table-top. A fine new leaf carpet, some eight inches in depth, covers the floor of the little house—we secured a large supply of dry leaves before the snow came—and a wadding mound of most generous dimensions rises from the dormitory corner.

Although it cannot be supposed that the groom-elect understands anything of

the nature of these preparations, he is nevertheless deeply interested in them all, and has followed us about untiringly during the entire process of refurnishing his house and replanting his forest. Each tree has been many times visited, and the evergreen depths carefully explored, but at last the sleepy little fellow has settled down in his cot; not burrowing a tunnel through its base according to his usual custom with a freshly-made bed, but preparing for himself a crater-like nest in the very summit of the mound.

The bride's train is, no doubt, even now speeding on its way to us, and we find ourselves speculating gravely regarding the little lady's age, disposition and appearance, as well as rather nervously canvassing the matter of Little Man's appreciation of his Christmas gift. Although his receptions are now everyday

affairs, his attitude toward the redcoats is as indifferent as on the occasion of his first "At Home." He cares not a jot for these wild cousins. But a gentle Mrs. Gray will surely appeal to his sense of chivalry. After all we need have no fear that Little Man will disappoint us by a discourteous reception of the gray stranger.

THE BEST LAID PLANS

The best laid plans o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promis'd joy.

To a Mouse—ROBERT BURNS.

XII

THE BEST LAID PLANS

Little Man was suddenly awakened by an earthquake-like disturbance of his bed. He jumped up and peeped over the edge of the crater just in time to descry a large gray form disappearing in the foundations of the wadding mountain. When the volcanic eruption had subsided, Little Man, with lamentable resignation and a most disappointing lack of curiosity, again settled down unconcernedly in his crater-bed.

But a still ruder shock was in store for him; for all at once, as if swept by a cyclone, the home-made forest began to rock wildly; its branches snapped and groaned and tugged desperately at their

fastenings, and the cage swayed to and fro as if struck by a tidal wave.

Again, as Little Man peeped out over the mountain-top, he caught sight of a disturbing gray form, even larger than the first intruder, and again as on the earlier occasion, quiet ensued when the wild creature had shot in through the cage door and disappeared in the heart of the capacious mound.

The second invasion of his house seemed greatly to perplex and disturb my little graycoat, but it was his resting-time—not the hour for vexing his soul with troublesome problems—and shortly after the cyclone had spent itself, he withdrew again, pulling the clothes well over his head as he settled down in a second attempt to resume his slumbers. Affairs seemed to interest him only as they bore directly on his dwelling or his cot;

yet scenes of a thrilling nature were being enacted in other parts of the den.

A wake of swaying picture frames represented the route over which a third gray creature—a very monster, was making his way in his endeavors to find a hiding-place. He scaled walls, leaped over tables, knocked down books, overturned flower pots, tore at curtains and worked such havoc generally that I then and there bestowed on him the well-deserved appellation of Attila.

My friend had not only secured a bride for Little Man, but with the laudable desire of strengthening the gray forces and of preparing them for a fair show in encounters with the redcoats, she had brought home an extra bride and groom. The latter, the dealer had said, was an unusually large and sprightly squirrel, and we had no difficulty in identifying

him with the devastating being who was creating such a revolution in my usually peaceful den. The dealer's assertions regarding him were indisputably true. In Attila's master-leap he bounded from the floor and vaulted directly over a fairly high lamp which stood on the centre table. The clever acrobat did not even graze the chimney-top in his flight; nevertheless, it was to us a matter of hearty congratulation that we had elected to use gas for illuminating on this festive occasion. During the entire raid I stood near the gas fixture, my hand on the regulating stop, ready to turn off the light at the first intimation that the devastator had selected for a point of attack.

But Atilla's spring over the lamp represented the last act of the performance, for on alighting he found himself in the neighborhood of the sofa, under which,

by a stroke of good luck but bad housekeeping, I had shortly before stowed away a large bundle of packing-papers. Into the depths of this hospitable package Atilla plunged madly; then, as all was quiet, we locked the screen door and betook ourselves to our own resting-places. The chase had been an exciting and a fatiguing one, and the general outlook was slightly discouraging. Nevertheless our good nights were interspersed with many reassuring prophecies regarding the result of the experiment and the evolution of the new-comers. It was true that Valentine and Little Man at their wildest had been but lamb-like when compared with these belligerents; but Valentine was hardly more than half-grown when he came to us, and Little Man a mere kitten of a squirrel; while the gentleman and ladies who comprised the

later consignment represented vigorous adults. Given but a fair opportunity they would probably emulate Little Man in tameness and docility. After the long imprisonment in the box and the terrible journey by rail, what more natural than that the poor creatures should manifest great aggressiveness and terror?

My friend had trusted to no cardboard conveyance on the occasion of the second guest, but had prepared for the travellers a strong wooden box twice lined with wire netting; and well it was that she had taken such precautions, for the squirrels made furious resistance all during the entire journey and would certainly have escaped from a less secure prison.

But in spite of all our stout-hearted protestations each entertained secret apprehensions regarding the success of the experiment, and it was with many mis-

givings that I made my way to the scene of action as early the next morning as daylight permitted me to distinguish objects.

Such a picture of desolation as the tornado-swept den presented! But all seemed peaceful enough as far as the gray inmates were concerned. From my hiding-place behind the portière which hangs at the screen door I beheld the formidable Atilla cautiously emerging from his stronghold under the sofa and making his way toward some nuts which I had placed at a short distance from his retreat. Little Man, as if conscious of the duties that devolved on him as host, was personally conducting from one point of interest to another the giant lady whose first appearance had played such havoc with my carefully prepared forest. He went somewhat in advance of the Ama-

zon, while apparently initiating her into the ways of the den, halting now and then and turning toward her as if to make sure that she overlooked nothing.

"Here, my dear," it seemed to me as if he might be saying, "here is the elevated railway. At this station you will always find plenty of provisions. From the first window one gets the best forest outlook, but when the sun shines, it is at the second window that the warm rays pour in without hindrance. Here is a table which affords excellent foraging opportunities. This stretch of wall-paper used to be luscious, but don't taste it, my dear. Something awful happened to it one day and it's not fit to eat now."

"So!" I said to myself, "the huge lady must be Little Man's fiancée." As a matter of fact she looks more like his grandmother.

But the third squirrel who, while smaller than the other guests, was large when compared with Little Man, paid no heed to anything in the room, but sat looking out of a window with such hopeless dejection in both face and attitude that my heart ached for her. Now and then her head sank on her breast and her eyes closed as if in utter despair. Again she would rouse herself and begin anew the wistful contemplation of hills, meadows, forest, sky, and all the great, free outdoors from which she was withheld by nothing but a crude pane of glass. Yet the outlook was a dreary one considered from the standpoint of a dweller in the sheltered den. The sky looked angry, the forest gloomy and inhospitable, the cold was intense, and a furious northwest wind was driving before it clouds of finely powdered snow which massed themselves

up in great drifts against all resisting objects.

As I looked at the poor little captive, there flashed through my mind a story I had long before read regarding a wretched prisoner who, immured in the darkest and most carefully guarded of underground dungeons, was planning with the energy of despair to make his way from the bowels of the earth up to the light of day. He had followed the seasons closely enough to know that in the world so far above his living grave it was the dead of winter, and, even were he to succeed in making his escape, there would be no one to shelter him. He would have to strike for the cruel wilds; his wretched clothing would not suffice to protect him from the merciless climate, and the end of his quest would be death.

"But that means freedom," he cried

in a frenzy of exultation. Death by freezing, starvation, from the fury of wild beasts or at the hands of his pursuers, any fate which met him in the great, free world would be welcome when compared with the horrors of living entombment.

The thought of the desperate prisoner, coupled with the sight of my little gray captive, drew from me an involuntary exclamation of pity. At the same time I inadvertently moved the portière, and the three strangers vanished as if by magic. As soon as Little Man spied me, he bounded to the screen door, accepted his usual douceur and submitted to the customary caressing. But it was evident that his interests were divided, and after a very short stay he scampered away and joined the frightened grays,

who had again betaken themselves to the shelter of the bed and the leaf carpet.

Later I returned to put my chaotic den in order, turning my attention first of all toward the devastated forest; but the frantic skirmishing, leaping, scratching and scolding which greeted even an attempt at renovation caused me to abandon my project more heartily than it was formed. In endeavoring to straighten one of the half-prostrate trees, I moved the cage a little; hence the panic among the poor strange ladies. It was evident that they would furiously resist any interference with their domain, and as I was certain that Attila was ready to assume even a more aggressive attitude than that which the ladies had adopted, I took care to avoid his neighborhood also.

My orbit had narrowed down to such

a small one that I determined to seek quarters where I might be allowed to call my soul my own. Therefore, with this object in view, and also with the thought of protecting my modest possessions, I removed pictures, curtains, table-covers, books, papers, lamps and all other breakables, and after putting out generous food supplies for both indoor and outdoor guests, I bade farewell to the den and departed, followed by ny indignant and loudly remonstrating little doggie. It is evident that she bitterly resents the presence of the unsociable trio.

The thought of the poor despairing captive fairly haunts me, and indirectly I feel responsible for much of her misery. I am convinced that her knowledge of outdoors is both recent and practical, and I have no doubt that the

same assertion might be made regarding the experience of her fellow-travellers, yet it is for her sake far more than for theirs that I find myself eagerly canvassing the possibilities of an early spring and computing the weeks that must elapse before mild weather will make it practicable to free my prisoners. How I wish it were possible to brighten their captivity, by unfolding to them my plans for their release.

Four days have elapsed since the strangers came, and I have made no progress in winning their esteem or confidence. I cannot affirm that the malted milk diet had anything to do with Valentine's sudden demise, yet I am determined not to resort to this or any other unusual food in attempting to win the favor of these poor wild creatures. But, after all, I do not think that tons of good

things would make any difference in their attitude toward me. Even Little Man seems to be losing ground with his companions—this I have learned during my observations from behind the portière—and the giant lady who at first tolerated him now sends him off unceremoniously with a growl and a box on the ear. Indeed so shrewish is her general behavior that I have named her Xantippe. The strange gentleman and Little Man are also on something of a hostile footing, and the wretched captive lady pays no attention to my little gray gallant's occasional attempts at friendliness. But in spite of all these discouraging circumstances, he is still absorbed with his guests, and only pays me flying visits during the odd half-hours that I spend in the den.

Red squirrel faces press inquisitively

and reproachfully against the restaurant window panes, but receptions are not to be thought of nowadays. The manipulation of the cord by which the little window-door is regulated would demand the ability and vigilance of a four-in-hand driver; for a streak of gray lightning darting out through the hospitable little door might at any moment announce the escape of one of my prisoners.

Alas, my well-laid plan seems to have gone "a-gley."

RE-ENTER DISCORD

In single opposition hand in hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour.

Henry IV.—Act. I.

—SHAKESPEARE.

XIII

RE-ENTER DISCORD

Little Man and his bride have had a quarrel of such magnitude that separation has been the result.

This entry represents another interval of four days, on the earliest of which the aforesaid battle took place. My little friend's angry cries caused me to hasten to his aid, and I arrived on the scene just in time to see the giantess deal him a couple of severe blows, which I am happy to say he returned with biting, scratching interest. At sight of me she fled to the homestead; the ex-groom following closely and continuing the attack, even after his fair antagonist had taken refuge in the mound. When the evening's dis-

comfiture was complete Little Man rushed triumphantly back to me, and, making a ladder of my skirt, mounted to my arms and thence to my shoulder, where he settled down as if for the purpose of enjoying a good rest. I had no sooner ensconced myself in a rocking-chair, than Fifine—who, like myself, had rushed to the den at the first sounds of strife—took up her position on my lap; and thus, for the first time since the advent of the strangers, we three found ourselves in the friendly, affectionate, old-time attitude.

As I rocked and caressed my pet, I busied myself with a survey of the situation which, for one of the grays at least, seemed fraught with so much discomfort and even with danger. But before I had succeeded in forming any plans for his protection, Little Man slid

down my arm, jumped to the floor, and hurried away to the homestead, evidently unable to resist the promptings of his inquisitive interest regarding the progress of affairs in the enemy's camp.

I must not forget to mention that Attila has also found his way to the cage—having deserted his quarters under the sofa a day or so before the outbreak between Xantippe and Little Man—and, in view of the hostile happenings of the morning, as well as of the fact that the mound has been called upon to shelter a fourth tenant, I thought it advisable to prepare a second home, in which any persecuted member or members of the quartette might take refuge. For the dwelling that is ample while relations are harmonious may prove terribly straitened in times of strife.

Once more the annex—the cage which

represents the scene of poor Valentine's exile—was brought to the den. Again it was carefully stocked and furnished, then, as all seemed quiet in the homestead and Little Man had determined to make his enemies a call of some length, I left the den and went to the bay window, where little doggie and I have established ourselves since the time of our expulsion from the study. I visited Little Man several times through the day; now coming upon him while he was engaged in violent contention with Xantippe or Attila, again finding him eager for my sympathy and companionship, or still again catching a glimpse of him as he disappeared in the large cage. Why he should persist in going where he is so evidently not wanted was more than I could understand.

But when evening came I went once

more to the den, and as I stood at the hostelry window looking out toward the scene of enchantment which the snow-draped, moon-lit forest presented, I heard a faint rustling among the leaves with which the annex is carpeted, and turning round I saw the quaint figure of Little Man at the door of his new house. By the light of the moon and in the midst of his forest settings he looked like some benevolent little elf or wood sprite.

As he stepped forward to meet me, I stroked his lovely soft coat again and again, telling him the while that he was a wise Little Man and had done well to separate himself from the company of the savages in the homestead, and when he turned back into his snug house, I left the den, much reassured regarding his safety.

If the name of Little Man seemed an appropriate one at the time of its bestowal, it has acquired an extra fitness since its owner's accession to the office of householder. He spends much of his time at the door of his dwelling, with a chip on his shoulder—candor compels me to acknowledge it—and a friend has remarked that the little fellow needs but an armchair and a pipe, to complete his likeness to a diminutive old man.

Although ever affectionate and gentle with his human friends and patronizingly fond of Fifine, Little Man has nevertheless scant leisure to bestow on us now, for the object of his life appears to be the detection and frustration of an attempt to attack his property. Let Attila or Xantippe but approach his side of the den and straightway my brave little warrior rushes furiously down upon them;

nor does he halt in the pursuit until he has driven them all the way home. But in spite of this vigilant conservatism regarding his own quarters Little Man reserves to himself a sort of suzerainty or signorial right, and visits his vassals' domains as often as fancy leads him their way.

Such a daring spirit as is lodged in the small gray body! But his recklessness often causes me to tremble for his safety, and, on one occasion, with a view to his protection, I locked the gray trio in their cage. But, as in the case when the door was shut against Valentine, the outsider went clambering all over the homestead seeking to force an entrance; while from the beleaguered quarter there issued such ominous sounds of filing and sawing, that I hastened to open the door before the powerful teeth of my prison-

ers could effect another place of exit. To incarcerate Little Man for his own protection would be to break his heart, while to liberate him in any part of the house other than the sheltered den would be to expose him to the cruel risk of being crushed under foot or between doors, or of meeting his fate in an open fireplace or some other equally tragic way. There is but one thing to do under the circumstances: that is to leave him where he is, and to protect him by frequent visits until these wild creatures shall have taken their departure or changed their ways.

But not only is there enmity between Little Man and the newcomers; the latter seem to be at variance among themselves also, and in the noises which represent general strife one may sometimes distinguish sounds which, by the

uninitiated, might be mistaken for the singing of a bird. On first hearing these sweet notes I was greatly mystified. There was no mistaking the fact that they issued from the den; but what feathered creature could have found its way through closed windows and a wire-screen door? Eager to solve the mystery, I made my way cautiously towards the ex-study, and on stealthily drawing aside a corner of the portière, I discovered Xantippe in the act of wresting a nut from the grasp of the smaller lady, and I learned that the bird-like notes represented the latter's gentle expostulation against such tyrannical treatment. It was a relief to find that she cared enough about anything to contend for it.

I had been told of singing mice—little creatures who softly and pleasingly

warble and trill—and had often wished that some fortunate chance might put me in the way of assisting at one of their concerts. But I now have in my possession what is far more rare than a singing mouse, and that is a singing squirrel. I search in vain for some single representative of the feathered tribe through the mention of whose voice it would be possible to convey an idea of the nature and scope of Adelina's tones (Adelina she became, by the way, on the discovery of her remarkable gift), but there is in them a suggestion of various bird voices, perhaps the most distinct being those which resemble the goldfinch's call and the sad autumn notes of the bluebird.

But in spite of the fact that Adelina has broken silence, she is evidently no less sorrowful than formerly, and, according

to my interpretation, the plaintive voice is ever singing: "Si je n'étais captive!"

From my hiding-place behind the portière I sometimes see Attila and Xantippe making short tours around the room—generally carefully avoiding Little Man's domains, however—and now and then, with what seems to me like a scornful knowledge that it is only a subterfuge and not the real thing, they explore my poor dismantled forest. But Adelina does not join them. Beyond the desire to hide when startled and to keep from starvation, she seems to have no indoor interests. Her whole heart is in the great free world toward which she is ever wistfully gazing.

I have observed that any little chivalrous interest which Attila may feel inclined to manifest, any kindly attention which he may choose to bestow, are cer-

tain to fall to the share of Adelina. Between himself and the strong-minded Xantippe there seems to be little or no sympathy. Perhaps the very similarity that exists between their dispositions repels instead of attracting him.

I have not yet mentioned a slight personal peculiarity of this warlike lady by which we are always able to identify her with ease. The end of her tail is cleft to a length of about three inches from its tip, and when carried aloft—its favorite attitude by the way—the feathery branches resemble the swaying plumes on the helmet of a knight, and serve to heighten the gray lady's martial appearance.

From one angle of the bay window, in which Fifine and I now spend so much of our time, we can watch the habitués of the outer restaurant sill, and judging

from the occasional violent start with which even the stoutest of heart among these wild creatures will retreat from an inquisitive contemplation of the study, we infer that the discouraging faces of Attila and Xantippe are frequently encountered looking out from their side of the window pane. The battle between these sturdy creatures and the red forces will be an equal one I fancy, and the timid Adelina will, no doubt, be chivalrously guarded by Attila; but I begin to have serious misgivings regarding the advisability of liberating Little Man when the time for release shall come. Although brave in heart and much stronger in body than when he came to me, he is nevertheless a weakling, and had his lot been cast among the free he would no doubt have succumbed long ere this to an onslaught from some wild enemy. He is

neither able to cope with the hardy creatures of which the grove squirrel colony is composed, nor fit to battle with nature's wild forces; yet I feel certain that the valiant little fellow's aggressive interest in the alien party of grays will make him eager to follow their fortunes. What to do with my brave-hearted little friend eventually has become a genuine problem.

THE PROBLEM SOLVED

He will hear no sounds of spring,
Fairy blossom-dells that ring,
Streams that murmur, birds that sing,
For he knows not anything:
Make his grave.

The Robin's Funeral.

—LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

XIV

THE PROBLEM SOLVED

January has come, bringing with it wild storms, bitter cold and awful distress; yet neither storm nor cold can reach Little Man, for he lies in Mother Earth's heart beside his comrade Valentine, and a soft deep coverlet of snow shelters both the tiny graves.

There was no robin lament, no wailing of autumn winds, no rustling of dead leaves when we laid this little friend away. The dancing snowflakes followed each other around in merry chase; the hardy birds chirped and twittered as if in keen enjoyment of old winter's mad pranks; the jolly redcoats skirmished and chattered in the tops of the very trees

under which we made the tiny bed, but one friendly chickadee halted for a moment beside the lifeless little gray form and "Ah me, ah me, me, me!" said he, then hurried on his busy happy way.

The year was but two days old when Little Man came to his death. As time passed he manifested greater and greater aggressiveness towards his squirrel friends, and exercised ever-increasing vigilance in guarding his possessions. On the last day of his life he was presented with a pan of beautiful turf; a treasure which a friend had kindly secured for him before the frost came, and which her care had brought to such a luxuriant growth that June might have been proud of the trophy. Little Man burrowed and nibbled and buried treasure among the soft green spears, and two or three times, as if overflowing with delight, he

bounded into the air, turning complete somersaults on his way.

But after acquiring this treasure he was more than ever on the aggressive, and any graycoat passing through even neutral territory, ran the risk of being attacked by the valiant pigmy. Attila and Xantippe were several times routed while prowling around their own forest, and poor Adelina was driven from harmlessly contemplating outdoors through the remote window at which she took her daily stand; Little Man perhaps fancying that even she might be concocting schemes for a raid on his lovely green treasure.

My visits to the den were innumerable on the day in question. Not only was I highly interested and amused in watching performances in general, but I was also somewhat anxious lest Little Man

should carry his aggressiveness to such lengths as to draw down on his head the wrath of his enemies; and I even thought of removing the pan of turf which, apparently, was a source of as much anxiety as delight to its owner; but I am convinced that what followed would have resulted sooner or later under any circumstances. The end was inevitable.

At about mid-afternoon, attracted by sounds indicative of an unusually lively skirmish, I hastily but noiselessly made my way to the den; and arrived just in time to see Attila rush madly out from under the sofa and up to the homestead, via his own forest. He was pursued by Little Man, who did not halt at the enemy's door but entered, and, from all I could gather, administered justice to all the inmates impartially; but whether

for real or fancied depredations, I could not say. On emerging from the cage he bounded toward me, and seemed to be asking for sympathy and commendation. At any rate, I bestowed both upon him, then stroked his soft coat until it fairly glistened, and in parting, by way of an extra treat, I cracked a nut for him, which I left him contentedly nibbling. The affectionate glance with which he followed me to the door was the last I received from him. I never again saw life in the beautiful, innocent brown eyes.

It was perhaps five minutes after I left the room that I again returned to it, summoned by the angriest kind of a clamor; but by the time I reached the battlefield all was as quiet as a churchyard and not a graycoat could be seen. I went to the annex, knocked at the door, and, after my usual custom when wishing to arouse

the tiny master of the establishment, I called: "Little Man, Little Man, here's a caller." But no Little Man responded to the summons. I put my hand into the depths of the long leafy tunnel which led to his couch; the bed was empty. Thoroughly alarmed, I next turned to the enemy's camp. Ominous silence reigned in that quarter, but just inside the door, half buried under the leafy carpet, I caught sight of Little Man lying on his side. His body was warm and scathless, but lifeless, and one tiny paw was raised as if in defence or attack. The enemy had killed him. We like to think that a single, sudden, painless blow did the deed of assassination.

No doubt our dear little friend's belligerent and aggressive conduct had invited the fate which overtook him, but

in passing judgment on his murderers we could not forget that his first intentions had been friendly and his overtures on their arrival hospitable. It was after the rejection of his proffered friendship that he changed his policy and became the tyrannical enforcer of rights which were at least founded on claims of priority. Moreover he was such a baby; so small, so slight, although so valiant; and two giants (we exonerate poor Adelina from all blame) arrayed against one mite represented such a mean advantage. Our sentiments are divided between grief for the loss of our pretty loving little friend and indignation toward his slayers. Food in abundance and plenty of fresh water are daily provided for the strangers. As to the rest, no one goes near them, no one addresses them except on the occasions when chance takes us to the stair-

way landing upon which the door of the den looks out. At this point many a passer halts and with threatening demonstrations towards the homestead exclaims indignantly: "Assassins, we hate you! Servians, you deserve to die!"

Yet the poor creatures are more to be pitied than blamed. Our partiality for the beloved and loving Little Man makes us unjust to the miserable prisoners through whom he met his fate. Theirs is the wretched lot after all; not Little Man's, into whose short life so much happiness was crowded and to whom no harm can ever come.

AN INSURRECTION

I'm weary, I'm weary, I'm off with the
wind:
Can I find a worse fate than the one left
behind?
—Fair beings of moonlight, gay dwell-
ers in air,
O show me your kingdom! O let me
dwell there!

Fantasies—L. E. L.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!

To a Mouse—ROBERT BURNS.

XV

AN INSURRECTION

My den is popularly known as the Cosey, but under existing circumstances I think that the Desolation would be a far more appropriate name for it.

Looking back at the earliest of these entries, I find that in writing of my study I designated it as a room characterized by the greatest simplicity of furnishing. But in comparison with its present dungeon-like bareness the former state of the den might be styled opulent and luxurious.

At the time when the advent of the gray trio made it necessary for Fifine and myself to move, with nearly all our possessions, to other quarters, a very few

comforts, represented by rocking-chairs, tables, hassocks, etc., were left in the study; but a second clearance has been made, and, of the old-time, pleasant haunt, nothing now remains except the squirrels' belongings and the room itself. How much longer the doors, windows and walls will be able to resist the fearful onslaughts of Attila and his devastating band I cannot say. Like the starling in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," they cry from morning till night: "I can't get out! I can't get out!" The screen door is marked by great indentations and bulges which represent Attila's furious, battering-ram-like lunges at the wire netting. Here and there a little pile of chips bears witness to interrupted carpentering designs, and a crack extending all the way across a pane of glass in the upper

sash of the restaurant window registers one of Xantippe's wild dashes for liberty.

In my last entry I mentioned our avoidance of the remaining graycoats, as well as of the very room in which Little Man was assassinated; but frequent visits to the chamber of horrors are compulsory now, and at any moment I may be called upon to quell a revolt or thwart an escape; for the marvelous restraint which the brave Little Man imposed on these vandals wore off a few days after his death. It seemed as if, in order to break out in open rebellion, they were merely waiting to assure themselves that he had really gone. A civil war is under way, as well as a raid on our dwelling, and I sometimes wonder whether my unhappy prisoners will not eventually be overtaken by a

fate as tragic as that of the Kilkenny cats.

Sometimes I am summoned by a wild clamor in which even the timid, gentle Adelina's tones mingle, while the voices of the others—raised to about forty squirrel-power—make a deafening din. Sometimes a scratching, ripping, tearing sound will announce the contemplated, if not partially accomplished, demolition of property. All the hours of daylight are filled with anxiety regarding the plans of the graycoats, and we long to resume the peaceful life we led before the coming of these untamable creatures.

It is a sin to wish away the precious hours, yet—less because of our own discomfort than for the sake of the wretched prisoners—we are marking off the days with grim satisfaction; and more diligently than ever we search for indica-

tions of an early spring. We are now in mid-January. February—though a bleak month at the outset—softens towards its close; and the regulation March, blustering and unfit for launching house-sheltered pets as it may be in its beginnings, is often characterized by a genial warmth when the ominous ides have once been passed. At this time of warmth I think outdoors would be safe and hospitable for my graycoats.

According to the most favorable computation, however, the time during which I may be compelled to exercise this police-like vigilance seems very, very long. How hopeless and dreary, how interminable will it appear to my wretched prisoners! Again and again I think of the starling and of Sterne's soliloquy regarding this feathered captive and imprisonment in general.

"As for the Bastile," he said, "the terror is in the word. Make the most of it you can....the Bastile is but another name for a tower; and a tower is but another word for a house you can't get out of. Mercy on the gouty! for they are in it twice a year. But with nine livres a day, and pen and ink and paper and patience, albeit a man can't get out, he may do very well within, at least for a month or six weeks; at the end of which, if he is a harmless fellow, his innocence appears, and he comes out a better and wiser man than he went in. . . 'Tis true, . .the Bastile is not an evil to be despised. But strip it of its towers, fill up the fosse, unbarricade the doors, call it simply a confinement, and suppose 'tis some tyrant of a distemper, and not of a man which holds you in it,

the evil vanishes and you bear the other half without complaint.

"I was interrupted in the hey-dey of this soliloquy, with a voice which I took to be of a child which complained it could not get out! I looked up and down the passage, and, seeing neither man, woman nor child, I went out without further attention.

"On my return back through the passage, I heard the same words twice over, and, looking up, I saw it was a starling, hung in a little cage. 'I can't get out, I can't get out,' said the starling.

"I stood looking at the bird; and to every person who came through the passage it ran fluttering to the side towards which they approached it, with the same lamentation of its captivity: 'I can't get out,' said the starling. God help thee! said I, but I'll let thee out, cost what

it will; so I turned about the cage to get the door; it was twisted and double twisted so fast with wire that there was no getting it open without pulling the cage to pieces. I took both hands to it.

"The bird flew to the place where I was attempting his deliverance, and, thrusting his head through the trellis, pressed his breast against it as if impatient. I fear, poor creature, said I, I cannot set thee at liberty. 'No,' said the starling, 'I can't get out. I can't get out.' . . . .

"I vow I never had my affections more tenderly awakened; nor do I remember an incident in my life where the dissipated spirits to which my reason had been a bubble were so suddenly called home. Mechanical as the notes were, yet so true in tune to nature were they chanted, that in one moment they over-

threw all my systematic reasonings upon the Bastile; and I heavily walked upstairs, unsaying every word I had said in going down them."

Laurence Sterne could have understood my compassionate attitude towards my poor prisoners.

Little Man was a prisoner, but until he came to me he had never known larger liberty than that which a cage affords. I am more and more convinced that Attila, Xantippe and Adelina have tasted the sweets of freedom, and that recently; therefore nothing short of freedom will ever again satisfy them.

EXEUNT OMNES

Away; away; away!
Come all into the wood!
Follow me, I say, I say,
Through brambles, weeds and mud!

Elf of the Woodlands.

—R. H. HORNE.

All are gone! The lodge is empty!

Song of Hiawatha.

XVI

EXEUNT OMNES

The little Chihuahua dog and I are again installed in our beloved Cosey, and while she blissfully and unmolestedly dozes in her basket-bed, I take up my old place at my writing-table for the purpose of making the closing entry of this little chronicle. All the comfortable homely furnishings of the den, all the books, papers, pictures, and, in fact, every banished article, are back in their own familiar place, while homestead, annex and home-made forest are no longer to be seen. For life goes on once more as in the olden days when assault and battery and mutiny and vandalism

and fratricide were unknown within the peaceful precincts of the den.

But one regretful thought will intrude itself upon the quiet joy of the home-coming. One merry, loving little presence is constantly missed; and now and then, as a carefully hidden forest treasure comes to light or a nut falls out from among the letters or papers where it has lain undisturbed for weeks, I seem to feel again on my sleeve the gentle touch of a little gray paw, and on looking down I half expect to see an eager, upturned squirrel face and to meet the friendly glance of dear Little Man's beautiful appealing eyes.

At the windows—which are once more draped in their simple lace curtains—plants are again stationed. Primroses and orange blossoms yield their fragrance, and jonquils make perpetual

sunshine for me. Yet spring has not come; for, looking through the flower-faces on toward the great meadow-stretches down by the riverside, I see fields of huge, irregular blocks of ice, above which the seagulls hover and among which they dip for treasure cast ashore by the swollen river in its mad rush to the ocean.

But what of the graycoats who were not to be launched before the advent of genial spring?

As a faithful chronicler I should no doubt have entered upon the history of the stranger trio before branching out on other topics, so let me proceed at once to happenings which directly concern the captives; merely mentioning in passing that the Jolie-Queues, the Rufuses, the Feather-Tips and all the other red-coated patrons of the restaurant window

continue to feast at the famous hostelry and—according to the custom of the good old days—enter my den whenever an open window permits them to do so.

The gray squirrel situation reached a climax on the morning after I had entered my discouraged, mid-January record. As I stepped into the study on the memorable day in question three gray forms skipped nimbly away from the restaurant window and disappeared in the depths of the dilapidated wadding mound. Since the evening when the strangers came upon the scene I had not been able to touch their cage or to renovate its furnishings in any way, and had it not been for the carpet of leaves—the cleanest and most satisfactory bedding or carpet a squirrel house can have, by the way—the homestead would cer-

tainly have become a most unwholesome residence.

On all previous occasions the gray-coats appeared to have worked separately, but it was evident that they had fixed upon this particular quarter and this especial day for a united and desperate attack, and the result of their combined efforts was appalling. It was perhaps owing to the fact that the restaurant window looks forestward that it appealed to the insurrectionists more forcibly than did either of the others. At any rate the hostelry was a scene of desolation, and as the ravages of my carpenters could no longer be overlooked I summoned the housemother to a council.

She had been very patient with my whims, and had borne, without a murmur, the many and serious inconveniences which the possession of my pets

entailed. But at sight of the depredations which were represented by that morning's work she shook her head and looked serious. And no wonder!

In the hope of protecting the window panes, I had placed strong wire screens in front of the glass. The hardwood frames of these screens were gnawed and splintered in half a dozen places, and the wire netting ripped off like so much muslin. A little pyramid of plastering on the floor under the window suggested the significant fact that the wall itself had been attacked, and if farther evidence were needed, the deeply indentated sashes bore witness to the beaver-like industry of some member or members of the party.

"They will no doubt perish if I liberate them," I said, "but sooner or later they will liberate themselves; and in detain-

ing them we run the risk of having the entire window eaten out."

"No matter what fate overtakes them outdoors they cannot be more unhappy than they are at present," the long-suffering house-mother made answer, and I knew that she was right.

There had been a succession of bitterly cold days, but we seemed to have entered upon a milder era, one which I concluded presented as good an opportunity for liberating my prisoners as the winter would afford. When I went to the cage to take a farewell glimpse of the poor wretches, only one of them was visible. Attila and Adelina were buried under the leaves, but Xantippe lay on her back in the tunnel leading to the mound, and her head was plainly visible at the entrance way. She held in her forepaws a nut which she was devour-

ing with all the zest of a hungry laborer. Of course it could have been only by accident that she winked at me as I peeped in, but wink she unmistakably did.

After leaving the homestead corner I went to the restaurant window, where I removed all screens and other barriers, and swept away the very considerable pile of chips and mortar. Next I raised the window, when the long-unused swing board fell into place; and after I had opened and tied back the little reception door I left the den and took up my watch in the bay window at the angle from which the hostelry is visible.

Developments had not long to be awaited. A rat-like head soon thrust itself through the little door, but the body belonging to the head did not immediately follow. This was not the

mad rush for liberty which I had anticipated; but after making a lengthy and cautious survey of the situation, Xantippe stepped out. At this point Julius and Feather-Tip came bounding toward her, but the Roman General was routed by a single glance from the giantess. Feather-Tip made several angry, gnat-like lunges at Xantippe, but the latter pursued her way as if such attacks were beneath her notice. A second time she disappointed my expectations, for instead of making for the forest she turned away from the grove and disappeared around the corner of the house, being still attended by the angry Feather-Tip.

As usual, Xantippe held her fine long tail aloft, but never had its swaying plumes appeared to quite such warlike advantage as on this occasion. Slowly and majestically she went her way, the

Turkish trousers effect—always noticeable in a gray squirrel's hind legs when it walks—was deeply emphasized in the case of my stately vanishing lady.

A long, tedious wait followed Xantippe's exit. It was evident that Attila and Adelina had not yet discovered the open door. They were no doubt resting after their herculean labors, I argued, and might remain in their cage for an indefinite time; so I finally gave up the hope of seeing them emerge from the den, and went for my daily walk in the woods.

It must have been at least an hour after setting out that I again found myself near my starting point. I halted under a clump of trees opposite the restaurant window, and no tedious waiting, no careful calculation, could have served my purpose half so well as did the happy

chance that brought me on the scene just as two gray heads were peeping out through the little reception door. Several times they advanced and several times drew back, but at last Attila and Adelina stepped out together, and, following the course taken by Xantippe on her exit, they disappeared behind the house.

All through that eventful afternoon rumors reached me of the wanderings of the trio. One anxious friend sent word that she had seen gray squirrels careering through the trees on the opposite side of the grove. Was I certain that my pets were safe?

Another watcher had spied them in the tall pines near the entrance to the grove; a third had seen them disappearing in a brush-heap, and still another had witnessed a contest between a red squir-

rel and a gray, in which the latter came off victorious; but each and every onlooker testified to the fact that a perfect panic had seized the graycoats at the sight of a human being.

It was all very well while daylight lasted, but what sad fate might the darkness have in store for my poor wanderers. Looking westward toward the open common at sunset, I saw a long strip of ice, crimson with reflected glory. When I liberated my prisoners, that ice would not have borne the weight of a little child. Now it supported a long line of merry skaters, while over the firm, crisp snow—so soft, so yielding at noon—there glided heavily freighted sleds, drawn by curvetting and prancing make-believe steeds.

"Alas for my poor gray wanderers," said I, as I observed the signs of rapidly

increasing cold. "What will become of them?"

It may have been force of habit that led my steps to the desolate study when I turned away from the merry scene on the common. At any rate, to the den I went. The reception door had been left open all day for the benefit of red-coated visitors, but what was my amazement to see three gray forms make their way through the home-made forest and disappear in the homestead.

My prisoners had returned!

"After all, my friends, you did not find outdoors warmed and filled with nuts, did you?" said I, triumphantly. "And you are glad to come home when Jack Frost locks up the provisions and the water supply! Well, you are welcome, and remember that the latch-key

will be left out as long as you show any desire to return to the old home."

The next morning they were off at daylight, but evening brought them back to the den. The third day they set out as on the previous occasions, but when night came I looked for them in vain, and such a night as it was!

I have several times alluded to the severity of the present winter. It is one which the world will not easily forget. Search among the weather records reveals the fact that over half a century has elapsed since its like has been known in our country, and of all the bitter nights of the awful season, the night on which my graycoats did not return was one of the most terrible. Now and then the intense stillness was broken by the sharp, pistol-like report of nails bursting from their lodging places in the

framework of the house, and as with the Egyptian darkness which could be felt, this cold, in its intensity, seemed like something which the eye could register even in darkness. One's own comfortable quarters reproached one with the misery of the hungry, the ill-clad, and the poorly-sheltered; and thought refused to dwell on the unspeakable wretchedness of possible wanderers and homeless ones. How we wished that the accommodations, provisions and training which sufficed for squirrels could in some way be adapted to the needs of poor little destitute children.

The morning broke calm and clear, but still mercilessly cold, and I was convinced that somewhere within grove precincts might be found three gray squirrels frozen to death. As soon as the thermometer began to show signs of re-

lenting I put on my warmest wraps and started out on a hopeless search for the little bodies. In the course of my wanderings I approached the ivy-covered tower, not far from which is the wealthy squirrels' house. This dwelling, by the way, became finally so taxed with treasure that its sides actually burst, and its owners now occupy a modest villa which has been erected for them just below their former dwelling. The old home now serves as a storehouse only.

While I looked absent-mindedly toward this corpulent establishment, what was my amazement to see, first one gray head and then another thrust out between the diminutive bales of cotton which protrude from every crevice in the storehouse. I could hardly believe my eyes, but there was no mistaking the fact that the heads belonged to my prisoners. All

through that awful night they had been snugly tucked away in the depths of the warm treasure-house. In the gray of the early morning, watchers at the tower windows had seen the strangers cautiously emerging from their hiding-place. After seizing upon some of the provisions scattered broadcast for the benefit of the wild creatures of the grove, my grays had again retreated to their stronghold, from which they now and then peeped out, as on the occasion when I had sighted them.

"Surely, stress of weather need no longer be feared for the little creatures," I said to myself. And no doubt they themselves arrived at the conclusion that outdoors would serve all their purposes, for they never again returned to the shelter of the homestead, although a fortnight's option was given them.

The redcoats are even more friendly and sociable than formerly, but my liberated prisoners have learned their lessons well, and in every human being they no doubt see a possible trapper or jailer; for at sight of the most friendly among us they flee as if in terror of their lives.

Whether it was that their successful braving of the awful weather increased the grays' general self-confidence or not I cannot say; but certain it is that on the day following that bitter, bitter night, they launched out with new courage and made a savage attack on the redcoats. Adelina, as usual, remained in the background, but on two or three occasions Xantippe was seen to hurl a poor little red from a height of at least fifty feet (the marvel is that the creature was not dashed to death), while Attila started off on a raiding tour; entering all the

squirrel houses in which door and windows were of a size to accommodate his bulky frame, thrusting his paw in and dragging out supplies when entrances were too small to admit his entire person. But the triumph of triumphs came when Xantippe ejected the robber baron and took possession of the castle. From behind a sheltering tree I witnessed this high-handed performance. Xantippe still holds the castle, and the baron occupies a suite at the Octagon.

At the expiration of three or four days the reds seemed to recover from their panic enough to look their enemies in the face, and even to make resistance when their rights and privileges were questioned. Gray squirrels would unearth red-squirrel treasure and deposit it in new caches. When the usurpers had retired, the rightful owners would come

upon the scene, regain possession of their property and bury it in the stowaway places from which it had been stolen. There were hostile red and gray meetings in the tree-tops, but no more hurling to the ground. Attila's house to house visitations being forcibly discouraged, he betook himself to a small dwelling to which he seems to have a clear title, and from the recesses of this cottage Adelina's sweet tones may now and then be heard. It is evident that various concessions are being made, but Xantippe yields not one jot to the baron. She is determined to dwell in a castle.

The hospitable pine which shelters the wealthy squirrels' storehouse and villa has opened its arms to receive a third squirrel dwelling, a handsome house with fine large entrances suited to the demands of gray squirrel bodies and des-



SOME HOMES IN THE GROVE.

tined for my trio, but appropriated by both reds and grays as a sort of half-way house, a neutral territory where representatives of each party may halt and rest. An armed neutrality seems to represent the attitude of the tribes which now compose our squirrel colony, and this attitude is a permanent one, I fancy. Both parties seem happy and prosperous. The grove has stores in plenty and can easily meet the demands of all the fur-coated folk. Perhaps this is the reason why neither party routs the other, and perhaps for this same reason my experiment cannot be taken as a test one. But in whatever light it may be viewed by other critics, I feel assured that by three little gray-coated creatures its culmination is regarded as the happiest imaginable.

EPILOGUE

I vow by the tom-tit's foolish ways,
By the mole's front claws and his pin-hole eye,
The woodpecker's thorn-tongue and groundless dismays,
I have told my biography faithfully.

Elf of the Woodlands.

—R. H. HORNE.

EPILOGUE

The long, cold winter is over, the tardy spring has gone its way, and glad young summer is with us once more. The genial days are filled with song and fragrance. The trees and hedges are alive with busy little feathered beings whose hearts harbor the most beautiful, the most wonderful secrets. At almost every step of my grove rambles I come upon the happy creatures, and many a sweet secret have I discovered in the course of my wanderings.

But not to the feather-clad folk only has the season brought its joys and its responsibilities. Small fur-coated creatures—no less busy and earnest than their "little brothers of the air"—lead

tiny, tender young recruits through mazes of trees and intricacies of shrubbery and even over dangerous open stretches. Junior Jolie-Queues may daily be seen descending cautiously from their home under the eaves, and this very morning Madame Feather-Tip introduced three engaging little ones to the delights of the table d'hôte.

Nor is the army of ex-captives without its reinforcements. Timid young grays are occasionally seen following unsteadily in the footsteps of larger beings of their own kind, but owing to the extreme shyness of parents, as well as children, of this clan, I am unable to follow manœuvres closely or to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding the domestic arrangements of my former prisoners. I must be satisfied with the knowledge that all three are thriving, and

that the race has been perpetuated. Perhaps among the rising generation of Attilas, Xantippes and Adelinas there may be found members friendly and trusting enough to disregard their parents' prejudices and to mingle with the sociable redcoats in their restaurant revels.

My faithful little Chihuahua friend accompanies me in all my grove rambles; never losing sight of me, though her nimble feet may carry her through many a forest intricacy or underbrush tangle where I cannot follow her even with my eyes; but no matter how far we may wander or how prolonged our outing may be, she knows that the homeward way will include a visit to a certain lofty pine tree. Perhaps you remember it in connection with a late autumn dirge and a riotous mid-winter

day, and perhaps you will not wonder that as I halt with my loving little companion and look upon the two tiny mounds, I remember all the pleasant things I have ever heard of the happy hunting-ground, and think they must be true.

MR. CHUPES and MISS JENNY

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